

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 are pending in the application. Claims 3-5 have been withdrawn. Claims 1 and 6 have been amended. Claims 1 and 6 are in independent form.

Specification

The specification has been amended to clarify terminology set forth originally in the application as filed. Applicants attest that no new matter has been added thereto.

Drawings

The Examiner states that the drawings are objected to because the cross-hatching is improper. More specifically, the Examiner states that "portions of the drawings in section and made of an insulated material must be crosshatched with alternating thick and thin lines, not with just thin lines." Applicants request further clarification regarding which structural elements in particular the Examiner is referring to as having improper cross-hatching.

Applicants have attached 1 replacement sheet of drawings hereto directly following these Remarks. The replacement sheet has been labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header as per 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(d).

In amended Figure 1, the leader line of reference character "23" has been amended to more clearly identify the bottom opening 23 and the leader line of reference character "27" has been amended to more clearly identify the receiving chamber 27.

In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1, 2, and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,490,790 to Okada ("the '790 reference"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 1 of the above-captioned application, as amended, includes the limitation of “a shroud reciprocatingly mounted to the male housing and including an outwardly extending lip disposed within the male housing, the shroud movable between a retracted position and an extended position, wherein when in the retracted position the electrical contact of the male housing is exposed to permit said electrical contact with the contact of the female housing, and when in the extended position the shroud extends to substantially cover the electrical contact of the male housing and the outwardly extending lip abuts the male housing to prevent removal of the shroud therefrom.”

The '790 reference does not disclose a shroud including an outwardly extending lip disposed within a male housing such that when the shroud is in an extended position, the outwardly extending lip abuts the male housing to prevent removal of the shroud therefrom. In the '790 reference, an external connector 120 comprises an external connector body 11 and includes external power terminals 13 each embedded in a front wall of the connector body 11 and external signal terminals 14 projecting from the front wall of the connector body 11. A protecting plate 20 is provided in the connector body 11 and includes apertures 21 corresponding to the power terminals 13 and the signal terminals 14. The protecting plate 20 includes legs 22 inserted into positioning holes 23 formed in the connector body 11, such that the protecting plate 20 comes close to and moves away from the front of the connector body 11. A return spring 25 is provided between the protecting plate 20 and the connector body 11 for urging the protecting plate 20 in a direction in which the protecting plate 20 moves away from the connector body 11 such that the terminals 13, 14 are covered by the protecting plate 20. Thus, it is clear that the protecting plate 20 does not include an outwardly extending lip disposed within the connector body 11 that abuts the connector body 11 to prevent removal of the protecting plate 20 when the return spring 25 urges the protecting plate 20 away from the connector body 11, as required by amended claim 1.

Claim 2 depends from amended claim 1 and, as such, is construed to incorporate by reference all the limitations of the claim to which it refers, *see* 35 U.S.C. §112, fourth paragraph. Thus, claim 3 must be read as including the limitation of a shroud reciprocatingly mounted to a male housing and including an outwardly extending lip disposed within the male housing, the

shroud movable between a retracted position and an extended position, wherein when in the retracted position an electrical contact of the male housing is exposed to permit electrical contact with a contact of a female housing, and when in the extended position the shroud extends to substantially cover the electrical contact of the male housing and the outwardly extending lip abuts the male housing to prevent removal of the shroud therefrom.

Claim 6 of the above-captioned application, as amended, includes the limitation of "a shroud reciprocatingly mounted to the second housing and including an outwardly extending lip disposed within the second housing, the shroud movable between a retracted position and an extended position, wherein when in the retracted position the electrical contact of the second housing is exposed to permit said conductive contact with the contact of the first housing, and when in the extended position the shroud extends to substantially cover the electrical contact of the second housing and the outwardly extending lip abuts the second housing to prevent removal of the shroud therefrom."

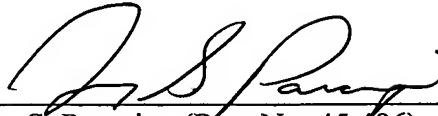
The '790 reference does not disclose a shroud including an outwardly extending lip disposed within a second housing such that when the shroud is in an extended position, the outwardly extending lip abuts the second housing to prevent removal of the shroud therefrom. The disclosure of the '790 reference is set forth above. Thus, it is clear that the protecting plate 20 does not include an outwardly extending lip disposed within the connector body 11 that abuts the connector body 11 to prevent removal of the protecting plate 20 when the return spring 25 urges the protecting plate 20 away from the connector body 11, as required by amended claim 6.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1, 2, and 6 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by the '790 reference be withdrawn.

It is respectfully submitted that this patent application is in condition for allowance, which allowance is respectfully solicited. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this amendment or the patent application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

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Respectfully submitted,



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